

METAPHYSICAL BOUNDARIES: INDIAN LITERATURE THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF TRANSLATION

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Abstract:

Translation plays a vital role in Indian Literature that connects diverse cultures and languages, enabling the exchange of ideas, stories, and perspectives across borders. In the context of Indian literature, translation plays a pivotal role in not only preserving the richness of the country's literary heritage but also fostering cross cultural understanding. This paper highlights the significance of translation in the realm of Indian literature. India's linguistic landscape is incredibly diverse, with numerous languages spoken across its vast expanse. Each language brings forth a unique literary tradition, showcasing a plethora of stories, philosophies, and worldviews. However, this linguistic diversity can also lead to a sense of fragmentation, hindering the accessibility of literary works beyond their native languages. Translation steps in as a unifying force, allowing works from various languages to transcend linguistic barriers and reach wider audiences. Through translation, the timeless verses of Rabindranath Tagore or the thought provoking writings of Premchand can be appreciated by readers far beyond their original linguistic realms. Indian literature is deeply intertwined with the country's cultural, historical, and social fabric. It reflects the evolution of societal norms, belief systems, and artistic expressions over centuries. Translation serves as a means of preserving this cultural heritage, ensuring that the insights and narratives embedded in Indian literary works are not lost to time. It allows future generations to connect with the wisdom of the past and appreciate the depth of human experiences captured in these writings. The impact of translation on Indian literature extends beyond national boundaries. As Indian diasporas thrive across the globe, translated literary works contribute to the preservation of cultural ties while also nurturing multicultural identities. Moreover, translations enable Indian authors to gain recognition on the international stage, fostering literary dialogues that transcend geographical limitations.

Keywords: Heritage, culture, tradition, literature, preservation

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Introduction:

Indian literature is deeply intertwined with the country's cultural, historical, and social fabric. It reflects the evolution of societal norms, belief systems, and artistic expressions over centuries. Translation serves as a means of preserving this cultural heritage, ensuring that the insights and narratives embedded in Indian literary works are not lost to time. It allows future generations to connect with the wisdom of the past and appreciate the depth of human experiences captured in these writings. The impact of translation on Indian literature extends beyond national boundaries. As Indian diasporas thrive across the globe, translated

literary works contribute to the preservation of cultural ties while also nurturing multicultural identities. Moreover, translations enable Indian authors to gain recognition on the international stage, fostering literary dialogues that transcend geographical limitations. Translation is an age-old activity which occupied a part of all regional literatures since the past. The retracement can be traced to the times of the great epics as The Ramayana and The Mahabharata. India has been a multilingual, polyglot nation with translations from Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali into many regional languages

Translation is a preserver of ancient literary and cultural heritage:

The ancient Indian literary heritage which is mainly found in Sanskrit language or Pali or Prakrit or even various Dravidian languages can only be preserved and even rescued if those classics are translated into modern Indian languages which can be understood by a large body of readers of this century. Moreover, the advantage of the ancient literary texts must be made available to the youth of today so that they can read the texts in their own language, assimilate what classics like the Gita, the Upanishads etc., say and follow them for their own personal growth and development. It is only because of translation of various literatures that regional languages and their literatures were popularized at the national level and national literature gained prominence at the international level.

Development and importance of translations in colonial countries:

The comment of Karl Marx that the thief, the translator and the seller were necessary for 19th century European colonial enterprise may sound to be very harsh but when one reflects more on this, one realizes that one of the more positive aspects of the colonial situation was the beginning of intercultural relationships between diverse peoples, which the 20th century has learned to treasure.

As per the sources available, in India, the first translator in Bengal was Pratap Chandra Roy. P. Lal in his work An Annotated Mahabharata Bibliography (1967) mentions that Pratap Chandra Roy became a bookseller in Calcutta. In 1869, he set up a publishing concern. By the end of 1876, he brought out a complete Bengali translation of the Mahabharata. The success of this volume goaded him towards a new goal of bringing out the complete Mahabharata in English. Having realized that his own English was not good enough to complete the task, he requested Babu Kisari Mohan Ganguli, a man with a brilliant academic record in

English to take up the daunting task on his shoulders. From 1888 to 1896, Roy published The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa in English in eleven volumes, for free distribution. He wanted to unravel the richness of the Indian heritage to the British rulers in particular and to foreigners in general. Thus in India, translations were used for spreading religious belief.

Literary Translation in Modern Period:

In the modern era, during British period, English became the official language of India and a new era of translation began. In the 18th century, British administrators began to study Indian languages to administer colonial rule more effectively. This gave rise to Orientalism—the Western scholarly interest in Indian literature, languages, and culture. In 1784, Sir William Jones translated Kalidasa's Shakuntala into English. In 1785, Charles Wilkins translated the Bhagavad Gita into English. Henry Thomas Colebrooke and Horace Hayman Wilson translated Vedic and Sanskrit texts. Christian missionaries translated the Bible into Indian languages like Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, and Malayalam. Although their primary aim was evangelization yet these translations enriched Indian languages with new vocabulary and forms of expression.

In India, Translation became a tool for cultural revival and political resistance also. Raja Ram Mohan Roy translated Upanishads and scriptures to emphasize rationality and reform. Other intellectuals like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, and Gandhi, K. Raghunatha Rao also responded by translating English texts into Indian languages.

Conclusion:

From the ancient times when Buddhist scriptures were translated to spread the teachings of enlightenment, to the modern era where contemporary Indian authors find resonance among global readers, the act of translation has transcended linguistic barriers to open

windows into the hearts and minds of people across the world. It is through translation that the mesmerizing verses of Sanskrit poets, the insightful narratives of regional novelists, and the contemplative musings of philosophers have transcended their origins to become universal treasures. In recent years, there has been a surge in translation initiatives and literary festivals dedicated to promoting translated literature in India.

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